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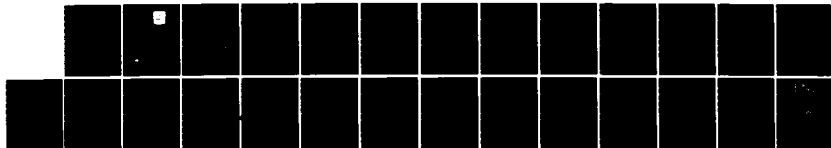
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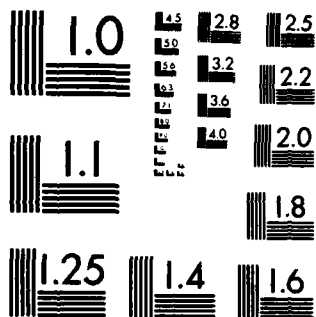
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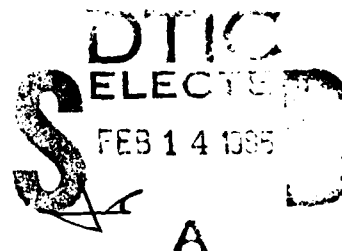
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STUDY PROJECT

A REALISTIC APPROACH TO THE US-JAPAN ALLIANCE

BY



LIEUTENANT COLONEL JAMES V. YOUNG

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USAWC ESSAY

A REALISTIC APPROACH TO THE US-JAPAN ALLIANCE

by

Lieutenant Colonel(P) James V. Young
Signal Corps

US Army War College
Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania
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United States strategic interests in Asia and the Pacific have grown substantially and will continue to grow in the future. Central to the continued prosperity and security of the area is the viability of the US-Japan alliance. This essay examines that alliance in terms of overall Japanese policy, to include domestic political constraints, the one percent of GNP defense spending barrier, and a slow but steady trend toward increased Japanese security awareness over the past decade. It concludes that there are several avenues available which, if pursued, will increase the effectiveness of US-Japan defense cooperation while avoiding the difficult domestic and multilateral issues which would be raised by a remilitarized Japan. These avenues include an approach which deemphasizes pressures on Japan to increase defense spending but encourages force improvement, expanded roles and missions for the Japan Self Defense Force (JSDF), increased joint and combined training, and expanded technological exchange. The essay concludes that substantial improvements in JSDF capabilities must be addressed in a multilateral context in order to reach the full potential of the US-Japan alliance.

In July, 1984, Secretary of State George Schultz began a speech to the Honolulu Council on Foreign Relations with the following words:

To understand the future, you must understand the Pacific. I came to this conclusion in the course of many trips to Asia and the Pacific as a private citizen. And five trips to the region as Secretary of State have strengthened my conviction. In economic development, the growth of free institutions, and in growing global influence, the Pacific is increasingly where the action is. As important as it was a few years ago, it is more important today. And it will be even more so tomorrow.¹

This statement reinforced what most knowledgeable observers had already recognized, that US strategic interests in Asia now were at least equal in importance to those in Europe.

It is in a way difficult to understand why American foreign policy had taken so long to come to the view that the Pacific is indeed..."where the action is." Investment and trade, considered by many to be the most accurate reflection of national strategic interest, have been growing by leaps and bounds. United States trade with East Asia alone has been greater than with all of Western Europe combined for several years, and showed a growth rate last year of 8 percent, as compared to a world-wide average of 1/2 of 1 percent.² Gross national products throughout the nations of Asia have increased at an astonishing rate in the past few years, and the economic success stories of Japan, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, and Taiwan are by now well known.

American diplomacy can justifiably claim significant improvements in our political relationships with most of Asia in the past decade. Since the fall of Vietnam and a short-lived perception among some allies that US commitments in Asia were receding, our political ties have actually become even stronger. Relations with China are stable and appear to be concentrating on areas where we have common and mutually reinforcing

interests, such as trade agreements and important (if still careful and circumspect) discussions and visits regarding security matters. The US and China have officially recognized that while their social, political and economic systems may differ, they nonetheless share many similar values and aspirations. Chinese-American relations appear to be growing stronger across the board on almost a daily basis.

Korea, always a close friend and ally, has become even more so. The Korean economy continues to boom, with real GNP increases of 5.6 percent in 1982, 9.3 percent in 1983, and 8.6 percent in 1984.³ On the political side, President Chun has made several important trips abroad, to include becoming the first Korean Head of State to pay an official visit to Japan. These visits and the continuing Korean economic miracle have played an important role in increasing national self-confidence and stability. Bilateral issues of contention between the US and Korea are minor in nature, and are mostly related to trade quotas, the level of foreign military sales credits, or similar "routine" issues.

In Southeast Asia, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) continues to play an important and expanding role in the development of the region. The credit for the success of ASEAN deservedly goes to each of its member nations of Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, the Philippines, and its newest member, Brunei. The US has encouraged ASEAN initiatives at almost every opportunity however, and our cooperation, political support, and trade links with ASEAN have been a significant factor in its success.

In the South Pacific, the Australia, New Zealand, and United States Treaty (ANZUS) continues to survive and prosper as an important component of our Asian network of alliances. Our mutual commitments to democratic

governments and open trade will ensure continued strong relations in this area in the future. In sum, our overall relations with the nations in the Asia-Pacific area are excellent.

Economic projections, international demographics, and our broad-based system of security alliances ensure that Asia and the Pacific will play an increasingly important role in US strategy in the years to come. Japan, with the world's second highest GNP, a highly literate and technically sophisticated population of over 120 million, and the most advanced industrial and scientific base in Asia, is clearly the keystone to successfully implementing American policy in the area. This strategic importance has been emphasized again and again by senior American officials and has been described as..."one of the most important in the world."⁴

Traditionally, the US-Japan relationship has centered on economic matters. The problems with our continuing trade imbalance are well known, and charges of unfair marketing practices and the threat of retaliatory protectionism are common newspaper fare. It is only in the past five years or so that the security relationship, and particularly Japan's contribution to it, has come under growing scrutiny. As a result, pressure has intensified for Japan to do more. This has resulted in at least modest increases in the Japanese defense budget, some qualitative improvements in Japanese Self-Defense Force (JSDF) weapons and equipment, and an increasing public dialogue in Japan concerning the security issue. In terms of realistic and quantifiable increases in the Japanese contribution to Asian security however, most observers would concede that there has been little actual progress. It would appear that the present approach of steady pressure on the Japanese to "do more" is not achieving the type of quantum increase in Japanese capabilities which most American policymakers and many

Japanese would like to see. Indeed, the future size, capabilities, roles and missions of an improved self-defense force are issues with which neither the US nor the Japanese have fully come to a satisfactory agreement; yet each side realizes the necessity to expand and coordinate our combined capabilities in the security arena. An unemotional evaluation of the strengths, weaknesses, and appropriate roles which each of us can most effectively play will ensure that this relationship achieves its full potential.

Any analysis of the role which Japan should play in the defense of Asia must consider the special circumstances of Japanese security policy. Following the disaster of World War II and the subsequent imposition of the US-drafted constitution, Japan was effectively demilitarized. Specifically, Article 9 of the Constitution has significantly limited the flexibility of Japan's defense policy. This article states:

...
Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes.

In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized.⁵

Subsequent events and interpretations of this document have resulted in a widespread acceptance of Japan's right to legitimate self-defense, however, and she maintains ground, air, and sea forces for this purpose. Other significant components of Japanese defense policy include:

- Non-nuclear policy: Japan will not possess, manufacture, or permit introduction of nuclear weapons into Japan.
- Restrictions on deployment of military forces on overseas missions. Training missions have traditionally been exempt from these restrictions.

- Definitive administrative steps, to include formal deliberations by the Japanese Diet, on matters concerning formation of defense forces. As a practical matter, this tends to constrict rapid and dynamic change of any type within the self-defense forces.

From these basic policy parameters, there has grown a general budgetary rule of thumb which restricts Japan's defense budget to less than one percent of the overall gross national product. This restriction, while not required by law, has nonetheless taken on an important psychological character in the context of the Japanese defense debate. Many knowledgeable observers believe that violation of this self-imposed ceiling would result in such an exacerbation of the defense issue as to nullify any potential gains realized by the increased spending. Indeed, even those in the Japanese government who tend to favor significantly increased defense spending are wary of breaching the one percent ceiling, believing that such an event might trigger a widespread political backlash. This could have the potential to cost the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) their already slim majority in the Diet, which would have adverse consequences for any continued US initiatives designed to promote increases in JSDF capabilities. Arguments that the one percent barrier is a self-imposed "convenience," while not totally without merit, tend to overlook the legitimate political difficulties that breach of this important psychological barrier might cause.

When analyzed on the surface, it seems clear that Japan's defense policy unfairly constrains her military capabilities and that she is not "doing enough." Yet a closer analysis would seem to indicate that this conventional wisdom may not be totally accurate. Japan's defense spending record for example, shows a 79 percent increase between 1971 and 1980, compared to only a 20 percent increase in combined NATO spending during the same period.⁶ An

information paper published by the Japanese Embassy in Washington provides some interesting figures:

Today, the size of the defense budget of Japan ranks 8th in the world, 4th among the allies of the United States, and 3rd among countries which do not possess nuclear capabilities. As a senior Department of Defense official testified before Congress, the Self-Defense Forces of Japan have to come to possess, for example, "50 destroyer type vessels, over twice as many as the U.S. Seventh Fleet" and "approximately 400 tactical fighter aircraft, more than the Republic of Korea's Air Force or the U.S. Air Force has in Japan, in the ROK, and in the Philippines combined." Japan is now "the strongest non-communist country militarily in all the Asian-Pacific area" after the United States.⁷

The Japanese also make substantial other contributions to the overall security picture in Asia. Important US military facilities are located in Japan, to include Yokota, Iwakuni, and Misawa airbases, the naval base at Yokosuka (homeport for the USS Midway), and the Army's Camp Zama. American bases, logistics depots, and retrograde facilities in Japan and Okinawa are extremely important in the event of hostilities in Korea. Also, Japan makes a substantial contribution to the support of US forces assigned to Japan. The government of Japan contributes over one billion dollars annually to the cost of these US forces, which number about 46,000. This averages out to over \$21,000 per American serviceman; by comparison, the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) contributes about \$5400 per serviceman or roughly one-fourth that amount. Japanese spokesmen will further point out that the "one percent of GNP" figure is somewhat misleading. The Japanese GNP is, after all, the second largest in the world, and one percent is a significant amount in real monetary terms. The Japanese use different accounting procedures than ourselves, and such expenses as certain R&D costs, pensions, and other personnel expenditures are not included in the one percent figure. Defense spending over the last ten years has increased at an average of seven percent

per year, more than twice the rate of NATO, (which strives for, but does not always reach, a standard of three percent). Japan is also very active in the economic and developmental assistance arena, especially in countries which have security problems and correspondingly large defense expenditures. Many of these are countries where the US often has difficulty providing sufficient aid. Examples are: the Republic of Korea, which has benefited from a substantial influx of Japanese capital at low interest rates; Pakistan, where aid has significantly increased since the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan; Egypt, where the strong pro-Israel lobby tends to impose a ceiling on US aid; and Turkey, where political problems continue to prevent the US from providing adequate support to this country which is so critical to the southern flank of NATO.

The foregoing data is not intended to demonstrate that Japan's efforts are presently satisfactory. What the facts do seem to suggest, however, is that the Japanese are genuinely willing to cooperate with the United States on the defense issue, at least to the extent that it is proper and politically feasible for them to do so. The task for the US strategic planner then is not to become distracted by the Japanese failure to recognize a serious threat or spend a significantly larger amount on military hardware. Instead, planners must analytically and unemotionally consider what can realistically be expected from a firm and critically important ally whose threat perceptions, political realities, and military capabilities are not identical to our own.

Several things come readily to mind. Obviously, continuation of base rights and operation of support facilities within Japan are essential elements of our forward-deployed strategy in Asia. Although some members of the political opposition have called for their removal for many years, there

appears to be no serious threat to the continued existence of these facilities in the near future. Similarly, as a point of departure for potential expansion, we would hope for the nucleus of a competent and effective JSDF. Most military professionals give them extraordinarily high marks in this regard. JSDF cadres, both enlisted and officer, are extremely competent, skilled professionals. Equipment and weapons are also generally top quality, although systems tend to be abnormally expensive due to low production rates caused at least partially by a "no export" policy. Emphasis on improving air defense, intelligence and maritime capabilities in recent years has paid modest dividends. Clearly, the nucleus exists for a truly professional and qualitatively superior force. Given the basic good health of the US-Japan Mutual Defense Treaty (MDT), continued base rights and access to facilities, and a strong core of military professionalism within JSDF on which to rely, it would appear that the fundamental underpinnings for a revitalized defense strategy are well in place.

From this point of departure then, there are several areas in which we can improve the overall effectiveness of the US-Japanese alliance and ensure that it produces the maximum beneficial results to both sides.

To begin with, as we encourage Japan to increase her defense role, we must ensure that this is done within careful, narrowly defined parameters which are acceptable to our other partners in the region. In addition to the US-Japan MDT, our Pacific security arrangements revolve around a rather complex series of bilateral mutual security treaties with Korea and the Philippines, the trilateral ANZUS Treaty, and perhaps to a lesser extent, the Manila Pact. The signatories to these agreements are understandably apprehensive of a resurgence of Japanese military power. China, Taiwan, the Philippines, and most of the Southeast Asian countries suffered at the hands of the Japanese

during World War II. The Koreans suffered longer than most, enduring thirty-six years of a particularly harsh Japanese occupation; yet today even Korea and Japan see their own security, for better or worse, as interconnected and mutually dependent upon each other. Even the People's Republic of China (PRC) has given indications that they would not necessarily be opposed to a carefully constructed increase in JSDF capabilities. Fundamentally then, the proper role which Japan should play in Asian security is not simply a unilateral or even bilateral issue, but rather a multilateral one. We must be careful to approach it as such, and work in close and continual consultations with our other Pacific friends and allies.

Closely related to this multilateral approach is a realistic review of the roles and missions which the JSDF can be expected to accomplish. Indeed, "roles and missions" has been the basic approach of the Reagan administration, as opposed to simply urging increased defense spending or insisting that a certain percentage of GNP be devoted to defense.⁸ In this regard, it is clearly not appropriate or desirable for Japan to assume those roles which the US is currently performing, which include providing the nuclear umbrella and projection of a credible naval force throughout the Pacific and Indian Oceans. A Japanese military force which is capable of projecting itself throughout the rest of Asia would be inherently destabilizing and therefore counterproductive. However, certain military improvements are clearly appropriate and acceptable politically both in Japan and among her Asian neighbors. Examples are in air defense, antisubmarine warfare, and expanded maritime forces, although not necessarily to a "one thousand mile" limit, which has always been unsound politically, and without any really valid military rationale. In a contingency situation, the MSDF should realistically be able to secure the coastland and inland sea, blockade the Soya, Tsugaru,

and Tsushima straits, and assist in preventing the Soviet Pacific Fleet from effectively operating in the Sea of Japan. None of these missions require a "thousand mile" capability.⁹

Within the "roles and missions" context we should actively encourage the Japanese to review their force structure. Interservice competition for scant resources is a fact of life in Japan as well as the US, but defense officials must decide if the allocation of manpower and defense dollars is appropriately distributed within JSDF in consideration of actual threat and mission requirements. A strong case can be made that the threat of a land invasion to Japan is less likely than either air attack or naval blockade, yet the GSDF presently has almost 70 percent of the authorized personnel strength of the total JSDF and receives 37.3 percent of the defense budget as compared to 25.4 percent for the MSDF, and 23.7 percent for the ASDF¹⁰. Although the internal distribution of defense manpower and budgeting resources among services is clearly a national matter which the Japanese themselves must ultimately decide, they also have an implied obligation to use these resources in the most efficient manner. If US and Japanese capabilities can be dovetailed, both countries' interests will be better served.

Our combined capabilities can also become more effective if we upgrade the scale and nature of our mutual participation in joint and combined exercises. Much has already been accomplished in this regard. In the past four years, Japanese participation in joint and combined exercises has grown substantially. The catalyst for this expanding participation was the 1980 RIMPAC exercise, in which Japanese maritime forces joined with naval forces from the US, Canada, New Zealand and Australia in combined naval maneuvers some 500 miles south of Hawaii. Japanese forces in the 1980 RIMPAC consisted of numerous ASW aircraft, the anti-aircraft guided missile destroyer

Amatsukaze and the helicopter-carrier destroyer Hiei.¹¹ Although the GSDF had participated with the US Navy in several smaller exercises, participation of this size and scope was at the time virtually unprecedented. Since RIMPAC 1980, such exercises have become almost routine and have spread to all service branches. The GSDF and US Army, for example, have conducted large scale CPXs semi-annually in each of the past four years, and have upgraded combined combat training activities every year since 1982. Each successive exercise results in improved procedures, better cross-cultural understanding and a growing and healthy respect for each country's capabilities.

The days are long since gone when US forces were capable of "going it alone," yet combined planning between US forces and the JSDF is still generally macro-level. Fundamentally then, we need to instill in our leaders at all levels, the concept of thinking in terms of combined operations. The assignment of liaison and exchange officers and NCOs, if done properly, can greatly facilitate the planning and conduct of mutual operations. Attendance at each other's service schools, from the advanced course through the senior service college level, can provide the opportunity to exchange views and develop personal relationships that can often bridge the length of an entire career. In this regard, it is extremely important that our Foreign Area Officers (FAOs) be thoroughly trained and properly assigned. Foreign language skills deteriorate rapidly without use, especially for non-native speakers; these critical skills should be cultivated and qualified linguists should be given the opportunity for refresher training at every possible opportunity. There are also technical means, such as computerized translating machines and specialized wordprocessors that can be used to enhance mutual understanding and favorably influence combined exercises and operations. There are other opportunities which, while they may fall short of providing the extensive

benefits derived from actual combined exercises, still go a long way toward improving interoperability. Examples are information exchanges, functional area conferences, VIP visits, and such meetings as the Army's annual Pacific Army's Management Seminar (PAMS) which brings together Army representatives from over twenty Pacific countries to discuss common problems and solutions. Junior officer exchanges, guest speaker programs at staff and senior service colleges, reciprocal visits, and increasing the numbers of exchange officers at service schools are examples where interface with our Japanese counterparts can be increased.

As combined training, exercises and related activities increase, it will eventually require an indepth and serious analysis of the organizational relationship between US forces and their Japanese counterparts. This is not to suggest that major command relationships must inevitably be changed; clearly questions of ultimate force mix, attachments versus operational control, command and national prerogatives are sensitive and complex issues. However, as we endeavor to increase military effectiveness by developing a closer working relationship, it is natural that improved command and control will be desirable. We need, therefore, to examine the possibility of establishing more centralized methods to control and maneuver forces, whether they be Japanese or American. Binational control centers and Tactical Operations Centers (TOCs), standardized message formats, common terms of reference, timely intelligence sharing, and common basic publications (such as military dictionaries) are some areas in which improvements can be made. None of these improvements surfaces the difficult and politically sensitive issues of national control of forces, yet they are initiatives which can easily be implemented and pay substantial operational dividends.

The ultimate upgrading of our mutual defense posture may come not from improvements in the operational effectiveness of our combined forces however, but from defense technological cooperation. Increased industrial cooperation between the two most technologically advanced countries in the world can have significant benefits in lowering research and development costs while producing more "advanced" weapons systems and facilitating interoperability. In this regard, the Japanese clearly have much to offer. One expert has stated:

Japan's advances in such fields as computer electronics/semiconductor development, industrial robots, sensor devices, and fiber optics have forced the United States for one of the few times in its postwar history to weigh the implications of becoming partially dependent on an ally, instead of upon its own once-prodigious military-industrial complex to obtain technology reflecting the highest state-of-the-art. Accordingly, U.S. officials are calling for a "full two-way flow," or reciprocity, in U.S.-Japanese technological cooperation.¹²

Technology transfer is a two-edged sword, however, and one with pitfalls for both sides. Although their government has agreed in principle to technological cooperation with the US, Japanese business leaders remain sensitive to the unnecessary controversy which might be generated if they obtain an image as a major arms manufacturer. Also, Japanese-produced weapons systems, such as guided missiles and tank guns, have been subjected to criticism for a tendency toward "gold-plating," i.e. incorporating complex technological gadgetry at the expense of operational simplicity and standardization.¹³ Nonetheless, a carefully constructed long-range plan to share military-related technology seems to be the best and potentially the most fruitful area in which the US and Japan can bring their combined power to bear. For these technology transfers to reach their full potential, however, it will require mutually agreed upon objectives, expanded frameworks for

exchange, additional personnel resources, and a more active management role by DOD.

From the foregoing analysis it would appear that there are several practical avenues available to realistically enhance JSDF capabilities and mutual interoperability without directly confronting the difficult problems generated by the "one percent" or "one thousand mile" issues. Indeed, a more successful approach may be simply to let nature take its course. There is mounting evidence that a new realism is emerging in Japan concerning the security problem. Historical factors, the Korean airlines 007 tragedy, and the increased Soviet military buildup in Asia (to include the Pacific fleet and the Soviet garrison on the Kuriles Islands), have had the cumulative effect of increasing Japanese public awareness of security issues. Prime Minister Nakasone, a former head of the Japanese Defense Agency, is considered to be generally sympathetic toward increased military expenditures and cooperation with the United States. The future trend then is perhaps best stated by James Westwood, a defense analyst:

The next ten years...are likely to witness changes in Japan's defense posture that will be in stark contrast with the picture of...past years. Those projected capabilities, if fulfilled, would present the Soviet Union with a substantially altered strategic scenario in East Asia.¹⁴

This does not mean, however, that the US should now simply discontinue the pressure on Japan to "do more." It does, however, indicate that this pressure should perhaps be more closely defined as to its specific objectives, and it should be more carefully coordinated at all levels and among all departments of the government, to include State, DOD, and the senior White House and Congressional leadership. It is essential that our efforts not be overly forceful and public, but rather tactful, diplomatic, and private. There is substantial evidence that this type of approach has been more rewarding in

promoting international human rights than the public confrontational method; it also seems the appropriate approach to the defense debate. An aggressive, bullying approach may also ultimately have the reverse effect for which it is intended. Such an approach could strengthen the anti-military and other opposition groups in Japan and cause the LDP unneeded political problems. In the final analysis, we must understand that for Japan to make a truly important contribution to the peace and security of Asia, the impetus must come from the Japanese themselves, not as simple surrogates for US policy in the area. Put another way:

...we should not preach or proclaim so loudly our wish to see a Japanese shift toward greater defense expenditures and responsibilities. It is up to Japan's leadership to educate and persuade the Japanese voter. They must find Japanese reasons, adduce factors that make Japanese domestic sense. Otherwise wheels will continue to spin, and misunderstandings will be compounded in the U.S.-Japanese relationship.¹⁵

To summarize, it is evident that the Asia-Pacific area will continue to grow in its importance to the US in the years ahead, and that peace and security within the area will be a continuing concern of US policymakers. The role which Japan can play is extremely critical, yet at times we tend to approach the problem by encouraging the Japanese to simply spend more money on defense.

A better approach may be to continue subtle but steady pressure on the Japanese to increase defense spending and upgrade their force while emphasizing a roles and mission approach. There are also immediate but significant steps which can be taken in the areas of increased combined training, exercises, and personnel exchanges. Technological cooperation, particularly in the military-related field, will ultimately pay the highest rewards. Increases in Japanese military capabilities must be addressed within

a multilateral context which includes the rest of our Asian allies, who have an obvious and valid interest. It is only by working together with all the nations of the area that the US-Japan alliance will reach the full potential for which it is clearly capable.

FOOTNOTES

1. US State Department, Asia-Pacific and the Future, p. 1.
2. Ibid.
3. US Commerce Department, Foreign Economic Trends and Their Implications for the United States (Korea Edition), July, 1984, p. 2. The 1984 figures are projected based on data provided by US Embassy Seoul, the Bank of Korea, and the Republic of Korea Economic Planning Board and Ministry of Finance.
4. US State Department, p. 1. Also see Mike Mansfield, No Country More Important, especially Chapter 2, pp. 19-34.
5. Article IX, Japanese Constitution, as cited in Research Institute for Peace and Security, Asian Security 1981, p. 145.
6. Embassy of Japan, A Story of Four Decades, p. 4.
7. Ibid, pp. 4-5.
8. Robert F. Reed, The US-Japan Alliance: Sharing the Burden of Defense, p. 49.
9. An excellent analysis of Maritime Self-Defense Force capabilities and shortfalls is Hideo Sekino and Sadao Seno's article "The Armed Forces of the Asian-Pacific Region," Pacific Defense Reporter, March 1983, pp. 15-23.
10. Japan Defense Agency, Defense of Japan, p. 15. The Defense Facilities Administration Agency and "others" receive the remaining 13.6% of the Japanese defense budget.
11. James H. Buck, "Japan's Defense Policy," Armed Forces and Society, p. 93.
12. William T. Tow, "US-Japan Military Technology Transfers: Collaboration or Conflict?" Journal of Northeast Asian Studies, p. 4.
13. Ibid, p. 9.
14. James T. Westwood, "Japan and Soviet Power in the Pacific," Strategic Review, p. 34.
15. Horace Z. Feldman, "The US, Japan and the Tricky Terrain of Defense," Strategic Review, p. 38.

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